



**NOAA Teacher at Sea
Mike Laird
Onboard NOAA Ship RAINIER
July 24 - August 13, 2005**

Log 8

Day 9: Tuesday, August 2

Time: 13:00

Latitude: 56° 00.36' N

Longitude: 158° 45.8' W

Visibility: 10 nautical miles (nm)

Wind Direction: Light Airs

Wind Speed: 12kts

Sea Wave Height: 0'

Swell Wave Height: 0'

Sea Water Temperature: 12.8° C

Sea Level Pressure: 1002.8 mb

Cloud Cover: Sky 7/8 covered; Lower level: Cumulus

Science and Technology Log

Deck Crew for a Day – Part I

One evening late last week, I checked the Plan of the Day (POD) -- a schedule listing the following day's launch assignments and ship movements. I found that I was scheduled for an on-ship day. Teacher at Sea participants onboard the RAINIER generally follow a routine alternating between fieldwork out in the launches and days onboard the ship. The on-ship days are intended to give us time to interview crewmembers, research areas of interest, and prepare logs detailing our experiences and learning.

So when I saw that I would be onboard the following day, I made arrangements with Jim Kruger the Deck Chief to be a member of the deck crew for a day. While anchored in the work area, the deck crew's typical day begins with the responsibility of getting all launches scheduled for fieldwork prepared and deployed. For each boat going out this entails:

- removal of the tie-downs securing the launch in its berth
- lowering the launch (done with a piece of equipment called a gravity davit – a system of pulleys, cables, and hooks operated by a motor)
- securing the launch for the safe loading of:
 - personnel,
 - equipment: the CTD sensor used in taking a cast of the water column (see log for Day 3, Wednesday, July 27) and personal gear,

- and – maybe most important – the food and drinks prepared by the galley for lunch and snacks
- releasing the launch from the hooks (one on the bow – “For clear!” and one on the stern – “Aft clear!”) used to raise and lower it with the gravity davit
- starting the boat’s motor
- and finally, releasing the launch’s bow and stern lines, so the coxswain can radio in and declare, “We are away!”

The deck crew must work as a team to ensure that all of this happens safely, quickly, and efficiently. It is pretty impressive to see four to five launches mobilized and away from the ship in less than thirty minutes! On my first day (actually my only day) on the job, I was given the job of manning the stern line. Of course I had a “real” deck crewmember by my side giving me instructions and pointers and ready to step in if things reached a crisis point.

The stern line actually serves two purposes: 1) to make sure the launch does not swing back and forth too much while it is being lowered into the water, and 2) to work with the bowline to hold the boat securely alongside the RAINIER until it is ready to cast off. It takes quick, nimble hands (along with a few pointers on useful techniques from my partner and the Captain) to quickly release and secure the lines to the cleats along the ship’s railing. It is also encouraged that one perform these tasks without getting hands and fingers caught or getting the line all tangled up. I preformed my duties as a rookie would and successfully helped get all the launches on their way! It seems like we have done a lot already this morning it must be getting late. What? It’s only 8:27!

To be continued.

Personal Log

Hey all you sun junkies out there! Alaska in the summer is the place to be! We are currently enjoying almost seventeen hours of sunlight a day - sunrise 6:43 and sunset 10:38. This provides a lot of time for outdoor activities – we were out fishing at 10:30 last night. Finally had to turn the deck lights on at about 11:30, so we could finish cleaning our fish. Of course, all this fun in the sun depends on cooperation from the weather. Heavy clouds, fog and rain – not uncommon in our current location – tend to put a damper on the sunshine. So we’ll live large and enjoy every moment we have for as long as it lasts!